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ABSTRACT

The subsequent school progress of children who attended the Get Set Day Care (GSDC) or Prekindergarten Head Start (PKHS) preschool programs compared to peers who had a different type or no preschool experience is examined in this document. The study corroborates the two major findings of the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies: that preschool programs (1) reduce the number of children assigned to special education and (2) increase the likelihood of promotion to grade level. A locally designed assessment form, the Developmental Behavior Checklist (DBC), was also examined in this study and determined to have some predictive utility as an effective initial assessment instrument for identifying "pupils at risk" (i.e., retained in grade or assigned to special education). The children's 1983-84 school placement and their assessed preschool developmental preparation for schooling suggest that the DBC can be used to identify a population of children at risk who may require instructional intervention beyond the regular education program offered to students. The data from the DBC is compiled and presented in a series of seven tables. (DR)

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A FOLLOW UP STUDY OF CHILDREN WITH SET SET DAY CARE AND PREKINDERGARTEN HEAD START EXPERIENCE WHO ENROLLED IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PHILADELPHIA FALL, 1978 & 1980

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ABSTRACT

This report examines the school progress of children who attended the Get Set Day Care (GSDC) or Prekindergarten Head Start (PKHS) preschool programs under the auspices of the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) and who had enrolled in kindergarten in the SDP fall 1978 (cohort I) and fall 1980 (cohort II). The local findings are compared with the two major scholastic impacts as reported by the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies: (1) a reduction in the proportion of children assigned to special education, and (2) a greater likelihood of being promoted to grade level. The study also examines whether the Developmental Behavior Checklist (DBC), a locally designed assessment form, has predictive utility in identifying "pupils at risk" (i.e., retained in grade or assigned to special education.

The study corroborates the two major findings of the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies. Generally, the retention rates of children in both cohorts were found to be at or below the systemwide grades 2 and 4 retention rates, as well as Chapter I schools. The percentage of children placed in special education on a full time basis in each cohort was found to be below the percentage of children assigned to special education systemwide.

The DBC was found to be an effective initial assessment or screening instrument to distinguish between children who will be progressing satisfactorily in school and those who potentially will be retained in grade or assigned to special education. Based on the DBC, the preschool teachers' assessments of children were accurate for approximately 70% of the children in each cohort. Data showed that 4 in 5 and 9 in 10 pupils assessed as "performing satisfactorily" respectively in each cohort were found to be on grade level with the remaining number retained in grade and placement in special education negligible. Whereas, 3 in 5 and 3 in 4 pupils assessed as "suspicious" and 1 in 2 and 2 in 3 assessed as "delayed" respectively in each cohort were found to be on grade level, while the remaining students were retained in grade or assigned to special education.

For "special needs" (SN) children who were assessed as performing satisfactorily, 9 of 17 cohort I and 17 of 20 cohort II pupils were found to be on grade level. Of those assessed as suspicious or delayed, 10 of 18 cohort I and 14 of 23 cohort II SN pupils were found to be on grade level; the remaining students were retained in grade or placed in special education.

The Consortium for Longitudinal Studies (1981) initiated a project to determine whether preschool intervention programs have significant long-term effects on low-income children. The Consortium reported two major scholastic impacts on children with preschool experience: (1) a reduction in the proportion of children assigned to special education, and (2) a greater likelihood of being promoted to grade level. These findings were of interest to the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) because approximately 90% of the 6,500 children in preschool programs under the auspices of the SDP are from low-income families.

This study was undertaken to ascertain the scholastic pattern of children with preschool experience, specifically children with Prekindergarten Head Start (PKHS) and Get Set Day Care (GSDC) experience and to compare the results with the findings of the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies. The school success of pupils with PKHS and GSDC experience will be examined with peers (1) who have a different type or no preschool experience and (2) who have been raised in households of similar economic status.

Secondly, instructional activities in preschool programs in the SDP focus on seven developmental areas (i.e., gross motor, fine motor manipulation, fine motor writing, social development, self help, cognitive, and language). Instructional intervention incorporates the results of a locally developed assessment instrument, the Developmental Behavior Checklist (DBC). A determination of the effectiveness of the DBC as an assessment instrument for children without handicapping conditions and "special needs" (SN) children will be examined also.

If the DBC is found to be an effective instrument, preschool children assessed as demonstrating developmental anomolies may be identified as "pupils at risk" (i.e., children retained in grade or assigned to special education when enrolled in the regular school setting) and prime candidates for instructional intervention. The implication of ascertaining whether the DBC has predictive utility in identifying children at risk can contribute toward the (a) planning and allocation of instructional resource requirements, (b) alerting school personnel of a target population of children who may require instructional intervention beyond the regular instructional services, and (c) ensuring articulation of a child's instructional program from preschool through elementary schooling.

METHODS

Two educational concerns were addressed in the selection of cohorts involved in this study. First, assignment to special education in the SDP usually occurs in grade span 4 - 6. As a result, grade 5 pupils (mid-grade) were selected and constitute cohort I. Secondly, school achievement has been found to increase from K to grade 3 then declines gradually from grade 4. In consideration of this achievement pattern, pupils in grade 3 were selected and are designated as cohort II.

The two largest preschool programs in the SDP were selected for study. Both programs serve basically the same age group of children; however, the funding sources, guidelines, and consequent economic status of the families differentiate the programs. GSDC provides extended day care services to children of low-income parents employed or receiving employment related training or education. PKHS (the nation's first preschool intervention effort) offers children from exclusively poverty level families an instructional routine in preparation for regular school.

Children who entered the SDP in fall 1978 and 1980 and who had GSDC or PKHS experience were identified. Their grade placement 4 and 6 years after enrolling in the SDP were examined and the results compared with those of the Consortium. The pupils' DBC results were crosstabulated with their current grade placement and the DBC effectiveness rate for predicting school success was examined. (The DBC was considered an <u>effective</u> assessment instrument when a child was assessed as "performing satisfactorily" in preschool and was on grade level or was assessed as "suspicious" or "delayed" and had been retained or assigned to special education. The DBC was considered <u>ineffective</u> if a child was assessed as "performing satisfactorily" in preschool and had been retained or assigned to special education or was assessed as "suspicious" or "delayed" and was on grade level.)

DATA SOURCE

The primary source of student data for the study is the Youth Educational Progress (YEP) file -- a longitudinal file wherein demographic, preschool, and city-wide test scores are maintained for each child who is or has been enrolled in an early childhood program and/or Chapter I school in the SDP as of June, 1984. This file which was created in 1969 contains 15 cohorts (1969 to 1985) of children and presently has data on approximately 250,000 children. The data set for each child is approximately 300 variables.

In addition, two listings of special needs children were obtained from the PKHS program. Data, especially data pertaining to children retained in grade or assigned to special education, were verified against the Pupil Directory Information File (PDIF), an automated data base of all children enrolled in the SDP, and the Automated Special Education Management Information System (AIMS).

The SDP systemwide retention rates for grades 2 and 4 were obtained from the published SDP document, Pupils Retained in Grade: June 1983 for the 1983-1984 School Year. (The systemwide grades 2 and 4 retention rates exclude children in special education and the Homebound Program.) The sources of data for calculating the Chapter I retention rate were (1) the 1982-1983 E.C.I.A. Chapter I eligible school list for Philadelphia, (2) an internal reporting document, the Federal Reporting Requirements and School Annual Report, submitted by all school principals in June, 1983, and (3) Race/Grade Distribution Data by Districts as of April, 1983 prepared by the SDP's Division of Administrative Research & Survey.

RESULTS

ENROLLMENT STATUS

For cohort I, 1,905 records were extracted from the YEP file. Three of every 4 cohort I pupils remained in the SDP by the end of his/her sixth year of schooling. Of 2,287 records extracted for cohort II, 5 in 6 remained in this system by the end of his/her fourth year of schooling.

Grade Level: Table I shows, by cohorts, the percentage of children on grade level, retained in grade, and assigned to special education. For cohort I, approximately 3 of every 4 pupils were on grade level, 1 in 5 has been retained in grade once between kindergarten and grade 5, and 1 in 13 has been assigned to special education. In cohort II, 4 of every 5 students were on grade level, 1 in 7 has been retained in grade between kindergarten and grade 3, and 1 in 20 has been assigned to special education.

Students with GSDC experience had the higher percentage of pupils on grade level and correspondingly had the lower rate of students retained in grade. In reference to placement in special education, children with PKHS experience had the higher percentage of assignment to special education. (This more than likely is due to the federal mandate that 10% of PKHS annual class enrollment must be students with handicapping conditions.)

TABLE I

CHILDREN WITH GET SET DAY CARE AND PREKINDERGARTEN HEAD START EXPERIENCE WHO ARE (1) ON GRADE LEVEL, (2) RETAINED IN GRADE, OR (3) ASSIGNED TO SPECIAL EDUCATION AS OF JUNE, 1984

COHORT I

Preschool Programs	At or Above Grade Level		Below Grade Level		Special Education		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Get Set Day Care	776	75.4	180	17.5	73	7.1	1029	100.0
Head Start	278	68.3	97	23.8	32	7.9	407	100.0
Total PreK Prog.	1054	73.4	277	19.3	105	7.3	1436	100.0

COHORT II

Preschool Programs	At or Above Grade Level		Below Grade Level		Special Education		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Get Set Day Care	967	82.2	162	13.8	48	4.1	1177	100.0
Head Start	551	77.4	121	17.0	40	5.6	712	100.0
Total PreK Prog.	1581	80.4	283	15.0	88	4.7	1889	100.0

Grade Retention: The number of children retained in grades 2 and 4 during the 1983-1984 school year is presented in Table II to allow comparison with the only available systemwide data. The enrollment for each preschool program was computed as follows: total enrollment entering kindergarten less total number of pupils exiting from the system, less the total number of pupils assigned to special education at the end of the 83-84 school year, and less the number of pupils retained in kindergarten through fourth grade for cohort I and kindergarten through second grade for cohort II.

As shown in Table II, generally the retention rates of pupils with PKHS or GSDC were at or below the SDP's systemwide retention rates for second and fourth grades as well as for Chapter I schools. Students with GSDC experience in both cohorts had a lower retention rate than grade 4 children systemwide and children in Chapter I schools. Students with PKHS experience in each cohort had a lower retention rate than students in Chapter I schools only. Cohort II PKHS students demonstrated a lower retention rate when compared systemwide, but a higher percentage was found for cohort I.

Assignment to Special Education: An estimated systemwide percentage of children assigned to special education (SE) was computed for cohort I by dividing the total number of full time SE children (i.e., birthdate is listed between 2/73 and 1/74) based on the AIMS file by the total number of children who were born between 2/73 and 1/74 and with an "active" enrollment status in the PDIF as of June, 1984. This was repeated for cohort II, but the birthdates included those children who were born between 2/75 and 1/76. (The SDP special education exceptionalities include: blind, blind-deaf, deaf, educable mentally retarded, hearing impaired, learning disabled, physically handicapped, social and emotionally disturbed, severely/profoundly impaired, speech & language impaired, trainable mentally retarded, and visually impaired.)

Across the system, 12.03% of the children who were born between 2/73 and 1/74 as compared to 7.3% of cohort I students were assigned to SE full time by June, 1984. For children born between 2/75 and 1/76, 7.75% of the children systemwide were assigned to special education full time as compared to 4.7% for cohort II children.

In both cohorts, the most prevalant SE exceptionalities were learning disabled (LD), educable mentally retarded (EMR), and socially and emotionally disturbed (SED). As shown in Table III, the SE exceptionalities distribution of pupils with preschool experiences is similar to the SE distribution systemwide. (A test of significance of the difference between the percentage of PreK and systemwide pupils

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE OF 2ND AND 4TH GRADERS RETAINED
IN GRADE AS COMPARED WITH SYSTEM RETENTIONS
1983-1984 SCHOOL YEAR

COHORT I

Program Affiliation	Enrollment	No. Retained in Grade 4	Percentage Retained
Get Set Day Care	817	41	5.0
Prekindergarten Head Start	297	19	6.4
Total PreK Prog.	1114	60	5.4
SDP Systemwide [a]	12263	718	5.9
SDP Chapter I [b]	8120	535	6.6

COHORT II

Program Affiliation	Enrollment	No. Retained in Grade 2	Percentage Retained
Get Set Day Care	1029	62	6.0
Prekindergarten Head Start	595	44	7.4
Total PreK Prog.	1624	106	6.5
SDP Systemwide [a]	13091	1180	9.0
SDP Chapter I [b]	8887	912	10.3

a
PUPILS RETAINED IN GRADE: JUNE 1983, FOR THE 1983-1984 SCHOOL YEAR, Report No. 8408, School District of Philadelphia, November, 1983.

b
Race/Grade Distribution Data by Districts as of April, 1983, prepared by the Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation, Division of Administrative Research & Survey.

TABLE III

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF CHILDREN SYSTEMWIDE AND BY PRESCHOOL PROGRAM AFFILIATION WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION EXCEPTIONALITIES AS OF JUNE, 1984

Types of Exceptionalities	COHORT I		COHORT II	
	Preschool Programs N=105	SDP Systemwide N=1564	Preschool Programs N=88	SDP Systemwide N=999
EMR	14	214	19	191
LD	69	942	52	535
SED	20	203	16	119
Other	2	205	1	154

Key: EMR = Educable Mentally Retarded

LD = Learning Disability

SED = Socially & Emotionally Disturbed

Other = Deaf, Deaf-Blind, Blind, Physically Handicapped, Speech & Language Impaired, Severely/Profoundly Impaired, Trainable Mentally Retarded, Hearing Impaired, and Visually Impaired

with specific SE exceptionalities was calculated. No significant differences were found.)

Data showed that approximately 3 in 4 of cohort I and 4 in 5 of cohort II were at or above expected grade level assignment. The grade retention rates of children with GSDC and PKHS experience were at or below the systemwide second and fourth grade retention rates and below the retention rates of Chapter I schools. Also, the percentages of children assigned to SE full time in both cohorts were below the systemwide SE rates. The percentages for LD, SED, and EMR pupils in both cohorts were consistent with this system's SE exceptionalities norm.

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST (DBC)

The Developmental Behavior Checklist (DBC) is an assessment tool used in the School District's preschool programs to obtain information about children's mastery of skills in seven developmental areas: gross motor, fine motor manipulation, fine motor writing, social development, self help, cognitive, and language. In checklist format, the instrument is comprised of 173 items that measure specific developmental behaviors. The DBC is completed by the preschool teacher in the fall and spring of the school year for each child enrolled. Based on the results, children are identified into one of three intervention areas:

PERFORMING SATISFACTORILY: The child scores above the 25th percentile in all seven subsections of the DBC or scores below the 25th percentile in any one or two subsections.

SUSPICIOUS: The child scores in the lowest quartile on any 3 or more DBC subsections.

DELAYED: The child scores in the lowest quartile on at least 1 motor (i.e., gross motor, fine motor manipulation, and fine motor writing), 1 social (i.e., social and self help), and 1 cognitive (i.e., cognitive and language) subsection.

The DBC can be considered an <u>effective</u> assessment instrument when a child was assessed as performing satisfactorily in preschool and is on grade level (cell A) or was assessed as suspicious or delayed and has been retained or assigned to special education (cell D). The DBC is considered <u>ineffective</u> if a child was assessed as performing satisfactorily in preschool and has been retained or assigned to special education (cell B) or was assessed as suspicious or

TABLE IV

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DBC DEVELOPMENTAL STATUS AND GRADE ASSIGNMENT FOR COHORTS I & II AS OF JUNE, 1984

COHORT I

Developmental Status According to DBC	At or Above Grade Level N=816	Retained in Grade or Assigned to Special Ed. N=297	Total N= 1113	Correct Prediction: Effectiveness Rate[a] Cell	No.	%
Performing Satisfactorily	(A) 629 56.5%	(B) 148 13.3%	777	A	629	56.5
				D	149	13.4
Suspicious or Delayed	(C) 187 16.8%	(D) 149 13.4%	336		778	69.9

Available DBC data: 1113/1436 = 77.5%

COHORT II

Developmental Status According to DBC	At or Above Grade Level N=1091	Retained in Grade or Assigned to Special Ed. N=245	Total N= 1336	Correct Prediction: Effectiveness Rate:[a] Cell	No.	%
Performing Satisfactorily	(A) 843 63.1%	(B) 122 9.1%	965	A	843	63.1
				D	123	9.2
Suspicious or Delayed	(C) 248 18.6%	(D) 123 9.2%	371		966	72.3

Available DBC data: 1336/1889 = 70.7%

[a] Based on the DBC, the percentage of cases where children assessed as performing satisfactorily are at or above grade level and children assessed as suspicious or delayed have been retained in grade or assigned to special education.

delayed and is on grade level (cell C). The effectiveness of the DBC as an assessment tool to identify children as developmentally delayed is the sum of cells A & D. The relationship between the DBC assessments and grade assignments is shown in Table IV.

DBC results were available for 77.5% of cohort I students. The DBC effectiveness rate was 69.9%, that is, 56.5% of the students were assessed as performing satisfactorily in spring 1979 and were on grade level, and 13.4% of the students were assessed in spring 1979 as suspicious or delayed and were retained in grade or assigned to special education by the end of the 1983-1984 school year.

For cohort II, DBC results were available for 70.7% of the students. The effectiveness rate for cohort II was 72.3%, that is, 63.1% were assessed as performing satisfactorily in spring 1980 and were on grade level in school year 1983-1984, and 9.2% were assessed as suspicious or delayed in spring 1980 and have been retained or assigned to special education by June, 1984.

A further refinement of the relationship between DBC results and grade assignment is shown in Table V. For students assessed as performing satisfactorily in cohort I, 4 of every 5 pupils were on grade level after 6 years of schooling. In almost all cases, the remaining number of children was retained in grade and placement in special education negligible. For children identified as suspicious, approximately 3 of every 5 pupils were on grade level with 2 of every 5 retained in grade or assigned to special education. Approximately 1 of every 2 children identified as delayed was on grade level, while the remaining number was retained or assigned to special education.

In cohort II, 9 of every 10 children were assessed as performing satisfactorily and were on grade level after 4 years of schooling; 1 in 10 was retained with assignment to special education negligible. For children identified as suspicious, approximately 3 of every 4 were on grade level with the remaining number retained or assigned to special education. Two of every 3 children identified as delayed were on grade level with the remaining number retained or assigned to special education.

In summary, the data showed that (1) children assessed as developmentally prepared for school will progress as intended with 1 in 5 and 1 in 10 retained in grade by his/her sixth and fourth year of schooling respectively, and (2) that the ratio of pupils retained in grade or assigned to special education increases for children assessed as suspicious or delayed by the DBC. The preschool teachers' assessments of

TABLE V

GRADE ASSIGNMENTS OF PUPILS WITH GET SET DAY CARE AND PREKINDERGARTEN HEAD START EXPERIENCE - (COMBINED BY DBC DEVELOPMENTAL STATUS) AS OF JUNE, 1984

COHORT I

Developmental Status According to DBC	At or Above Grade Level[a] N	At or Above Grade Level[a] %	Retained in Grade N	Retained in Grade %	Assigned to Special Ed. N	Assigned to Special Ed. %	Total N
Performing Satisfactorily	629	(77.1) 81.0	129	16.6	19	2.4	777
Suspicious	59	(7.2) 58.4	31	30.7	11	10.9	101
Delayed	128	(15.7) 54.5	62	26.4	45	19.1	235
		(100.0)					

COHORT II

Developmental Status According to DBC	At or Above Grade Level[a] N	At or Above Grade Level[a] %	Retained in Grade N	Retained in Grade %	Assigned to Special Ed. N	Assigned to Special Ed. %	Total N
Performing Satisfactorily	843	(77.3) 87.4	102	10.6	20	2.1	965
Suspicious	98	(9.0) 73.7	27	20.3	8	6.0	133
Delayed	150	(13.7) 63.0	51	21.4	37	15.5	238
		(100.0)					

[a] The percentage in parentheses shows that for students at or above grade level, 77.1% of the students in cohort I were assessed as performing satisfactorily by the DBC with 7.2% assessed as suspicious and 15.7% as delayed. For cohort II, 77.3% of the students were assessed as performing satisfactorily, while 9.0% were assessed as suspicious and 13.7% as delayed.

children based on the DBC were accurate for approximately 70% of the children in each cohort. Based on the data, the children's school placement and their assessed preschool developmental preparation for schooling suggest that the DBC is an effective initial assessment or screening instrument to distinguish between children who will be performing satisfactorily in school and those who potentially will be retained in grade or assigned to special education.

SPECIAL NEEDS (SN) CHILDREN ENROLLED IN HEAD START

Ten percent of the PKHS annual enrollment includes children with documented "special needs" (SN) or with handicapping conditions. Of 59 cohort I SN children enrolled in fall 1978, 47 SN students remained enrolled by end of 1983-1984 school year (i.e., 26 at or above grade level, 13 below grade level, and 8 assigned to special education). For cohort II, 64 SN children were enrolled in fall 1980, and 53 students remained enrolled in the SDP by June, 1984 (i.e., 30 at or above grade level, 10 below grade level, and 13 assigned to special education).

As shown in Table VI and VII, the DBC results for SN children were similar to the PKHS overall program results.

Cohort I: DBC results were available for 78.7% (N=35) of the SN students.

* the DBC SN effectiveness rate was 54.3%,
* 48.6% of the students were assessed as performing satisfactorily, and
* 51.4% of the students were assessed as suspicious or delayed.

Cohort II: DBC results were available for 81% (N=43) of the SN students.

* the DBC SN effectiveness rate was 72.1%,
* 46.5% of the students were assessed as performing satisfactorily, and
* 53.5% of the pupils were assessed as suspicious or delayed.

Again in almost all cases for both cohorts, children identified as performing satisfactorily were either on grade level or retained in grade and not placed in special education; approximately 1 of every 2 SN children was found to be performing satisfactorily. Ten of the 19 cohort I and 14 of the 23 cohort II children assessed as suspicious or delayed were found to be retained in grade or placed in special education. (One of every 4 pupils placed in special education

TABLE VI

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DBC DEVELOPMENTAL STATUS AND GRADE ASSIGNMENTS OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN IN COHORTS I & II AS OF JUNE, 1984

COHORT I

Developmental Status According to DBC	At or Above Grade Level N=17	Retained in Grade or Assigned to Special Ed. N=18	Total N=35	Correct Prediction: Effectiveness Rate[a] Cell	No.	%
Performing Satisfactorily	(A) 9 25.7%	(B) 8 22.9%	17	A	9	25.7
				D	10	28.6
					--	-----
Suspicious or Delayed	(C) 8 22.9%	(D) 10 28.6%	18		19	54.3

COHORT II

Developmental Status According to DBC	At or Above Grade Level N=26	Retained in Grade or Assigned to Special Ed. N=17	Total N=43	Correct Prediction: Effectiveness Rate[a] Cell	No.	%
Performing Satisfactorily	(A) 17 39.5%	(B) 3 7.0%	20	A	17	39.5
				D	14	32.6
					--	----
Suspicious or Delayed	(C) 9 20.9%	(D) 14 32.6%	23		31	72.1

[a] Based on the DBC, the percentage of cases where children assessed as performing satisfactorily are at or above grade level and children assessed suspicious or delayed have been retained in grade or assigned to special education.

TABLE VII

GRADE ASSIGNMENTS OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN BY DBC DEVELOPMENTAL STATUS AS OF JUNE, 1984

COHORT I

Developmental Status According to DBC	At or Above Grade Level[a] N	%	Below Grade Level N	%	Assigned to Special Ed. N	%	Total N=35 N	%
Performing Satisfactorily	9	(52.9) 52.9	8	47.1	0	.0	17	48.6
Suspicious	3	(17.7) 50.0	1	16.7	2	33.3	6	17.1
Delayed	5	(29.4) 41.7	3	25.0	4	33.3	12	34.3
		(100.0)						

COHORT II

Developmental Status According to DBC	At or Above Grade Level[a] N	%	Below Grade Level N	%	Assigned to Special Ed. N	%	Total N=43 N	%
Performing Satisfactorily	17	(65.4) 85.0	2	10.0	1	5.0	20	46.5
Suspicious	1	(3.8) 100.0	0	.0	0	.0	1	2.3
Delayed	8	(30.8) 36.4	6	27.3	8	36.4	22	51.2
		(100.0)						

[a] The percentage in the parentheses shows that for students in cohort I at or above grade level, 52.9% of the students were assessed as performing satisfactorily with 17.7% assessed as suspicious and 29.4% as delayed. For cohort II, 65.4% of the pupils were assessed as performing satisfactorily, while 3.8% assessed as suspicious and 30.8% as delayed.

in cohort I was a SN student, while the ratio was 1 in 3 for every SE student in cohort II.)

DISCUSSION

The local findings corroborate the two major findings of the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies: that preschool programs reduce the number of children assigned to special education and the number retained in grade. The grade retention rates of children with GSDC and PKHS experience are at or below the systemwide second and fourth grade retention rates and below the retention rates of Chapter I schools. The percentages for LD, SED, and EMR pupils in both cohorts are consistent with the national special education exceptionalities norm. The percentages of children assigned to special education in both cohorts are below the systemwide full time special education rates.

The children's 83-84 school placement and their assessed preschool developmental preparation for schooling suggests that the DBC can be considered an effective <u>initial</u> assessment and screening instrument to distinguish between children who will be performing satisfactorily in school and those who potentially will be retained in grade or placed in special education. The DBC can be used to identify a population of children at risk who may require instructional intervention beyond the regular educational program offered to students.

Using the DBC's results in planning the instructional activities of preschool children appear to be consistent in fulfilling the local standards' of performance to ensure that pupils are prepared for regular schooling. For children assessed as suspicious or delayed, (i.e., have not yet demonstrated the expected developmental skills required for regular schooling but are age eligible to enroll in regular school) the articulation of instructional activities from preschool through kindergarten appears crucial to ensure that a child's schooling is progressing consistently. Furthermore, instructional activities that encompass a developmental emphasis beyond those specified in the standardized curriculum may be required for the latter group to keep pace with their peers.

Reference

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